

Literary Language in Early Islamic Poetry: From Pre-Islamic Bravado to Refined Expression

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Abstract—This study examined how poetic language among the Arabs transformed after the advent of Islam, and how the word, which in the pre-Islamic era was a tool of pride and warfare, became, in the Early Islamic Era, a means of education and refinement. Poetry was not abolished; rather, it redirected linguistic expression toward serving values and ethics. The study analysed selected poems by prominent poets such as Ḥassān ibn Thābit, Ka'b ibn Zuhayr, and Labīd ibn Rabi'ah, who lived through both eras. The results showed that these poets are clear examples of this transition, as they succeeded in maintaining linguistic strength while achieving stylistic refinement. Their poetry before Islam was marked by vigor, verbal prowess, and great tribal pride, often expressed through exaggerated language. However, with the arrival of Islam, the context changed, and the poets adopted a new tone—one of humility and faith—and began using poetry to defend truth and promote principles. The findings also revealed changes in terminology, a calmer and more thoughtful rhetorical style, and a shift in focus from pride to meaning. The poet came to realise the weight of his words and viewed them as a responsibility. The refinement of language reflects the broader cultural and theological transformation experienced by the Arabs. The significance of this study lies in clarifying the connection between language and values, demonstrating how words can build rather than destroy, and showing how Arabic literature evolved from hyperbole and conflict to wisdom and harmony.

Index Terms—Bravado, linguistic transformation, poetry of the early Islamic period, Pre-Islamic Era, refinement of expression

I. INTRODUCTION

Before Islam, Arab poets served as the tribe's voice, advocating for it, standing up for it, and bragging about its bravery, strength, and honor—even if he did so with harsh or antagonistic words. But with the introduction of Islam, this perspective on language changed, and it became crucial for words to be calmer, more sophisticated, and closer to their human meaning rather than only for pride, fury, or heroism (Bani-Khair et al., 2024, 2025; Rababah et al., 2025; Yazar & Batur, 2025).

The ancient Arabs acknowledged poetry as an instrument of power, and individuals who performed outstanding poetry were referred to be 'fahl' or 'word leaders' (meaning an eloquent and authoritative poet). One of the characteristics of the pre-Islamic era was linguistic competence, which was marked by pride, exaggeration, and even a scathing characterisation. But when Islam arrived, the vocabulary took a different turn, using terms like "responsibility" and "eloquence" to refer to ideas rather than feelings. From this point on, what we refer to as "refinement of expression" started to take shape, which means that the poet started to deliberately select his words instead of tossing them around randomly and started to prioritise substance above metre or rhyme (Alajlouni et al., 2025; Kaddum et al., 2025).

This fundamental shift was reflected in the poetry of the period when Muslim poets and those who lived throughout the transitional period started using language for social and personal development rather than mockery or boasting. Reading the poetry of Hassan ibn Thabit, for instance, enables us to observe how words evolved to serve moral and

religious purposes as well as how the language became more refined and restrained. Other poets, like Ka'b ibn Zuhayr, who started off as a satirical poet before penning the well-known poem "Banat Suad," which was full of love, regret, and manners, experienced the same thing (Essa et al., 2023; Al-Gayam et al., 2025).

The topic covers Arab language proficiency in addition to religion and faith. An attitude of compassion and sincerity now permeates the language, which was once full of pride and hatred. Islam did not oppose poetry; instead, it focused the language on more ambitious objectives. A distinction between words that harm and words that construct has emerged. Poetry is no longer only a means of expressing feelings; it is now an instrument for awareness and development (Al Etoum et al., 2025; Abu-Elrob, 2019; Abu-Elrob & Tawalbeh, 2022).

The study observes that the poets who lived between the two periods – the pre-Islamic era and the early Islamic period – were like a bridge between two worlds, where their language was a mixture of ancient masculinity and new tenderness. So we find that a single verse contains strength of meaning, and at the same time, it has politeness and gentleness of style. For example, Zuhayr bin Abi Salma's poetry was closer to wisdom and politeness before Islam. This suggests that linguistic refinement is not strange to the Arabs, especially when Islam expanded its scope and established it as a moral and religious value (Al-Rawashdeh et al., 2025; Aljedayah et al., 2024; Farhan, 2025; Jamal, 2025).

This transformation, which has become a language of poetry, is not simple. We are talking about a change in the way of thinking before it is a change in the way of writing, where the Muslim poet has begun to see the world with new eyes: justice instead of power, honesty instead of exaggeration, and mercy instead of revenge. And here, poetry became a means of education, teaching and refining people instead of being a tribal conflict; it became a means of preserving the values that Islam advocated (Abumelhim et al., 2024; Al-Jezawi et al., 2023).

Linguistically, we notice that the vocabulary itself has somewhat changed; the words that used to indicate war and pride have decreased, and the words that talk about mercy, faith, and good character have increased. The rhetorical styles have also changed; the imagery has become simpler, closer to the mind and heart, without ambiguity or violence. Instead of depicting warfare and slaughter, the poet after Islam discussed the human spirit and its conflict with good and evil (Abusheirah et al., 2024; Alajlouni et al., 2025; Al-Manasreh, 2025; Saleh, 2025).

During the Early Islamic Era, the language became humbler and more genuine. Even when the poet gives praise, it is focused on principles rather than shapes. It suggests that the acclaimed individuals are now seen as great due to their honesty, justice, or humility rather than their wealth or power. This development is significant because it shows how ethics are reflected in language (Sawalha & Abu Al-Nahel, 2025; Kinany, 1948; Makhoul Sleimann et al., 2024; Yaman, 2021).

This study explored how language affects communal awareness in addition to linguistic analysis. How a term meant to convey conflict has evolved into a symbol of peace. The poet used to boast about himself, but in the Early Islamic Era, he bragged about his expertise or faith. Thus, early Islamic poetry became a model of polite language, striking a balance between beauty and purpose, eloquence and responsibility (Alenzay et al., 2024; Khattab et al., 2024; Khasawneh et al., 2025; Rabab'a, 2023; Rababa et al., 2025). Thus, the goal of this study is to investigate how the transition from pre-Islamic masculinity to refinement of expression happened in the early Islamic period, as well as how this transformation affected Arab literary language creation. We try to understand how the concept of the word changed and how the poet began to choose his words carefully to express new values. It analysed a collection of poetic texts and compared them with pre-Islamic texts to understand the difference in expression, tone, and choice of rhetorical images.

A. Research Questions

This study attempts to answer these questions:

- How did poetry become a tool for refinement?
- What is the difference between the pre-Islamic poet and the poet of the early Islamic period in terms of language and attitude towards life?

B. The Significance of the Study

This study is not only about language but also the spirit behind the language. And how the word could become a means of reform, and how poetry could transform from a field of boasting to a field of education and refinement. What distinguishes the poetry of the Early Islamic E is that it combined ancient eloquence with new light, thus embodying a rare phase in the history of Arabic literature, a phase in which the word acquired its true meaning: it refines and enlightens, not just astonishes and dazzles.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

When we talk about previous studies and the theoretical framework related to the topic "the language of literature in the poetry of the early Islamic period, which transformed from the bravery of the pre-Islamic era to the refinement of expression, we should discuss how researchers and scholars in the past focused on this transformation. Some scholars saw the change as linguistic, while others viewed it as moral or cultural. The literature generally agrees that poetry after Islam was no longer the same as the poetry before it, neither in style, purpose, nor in spirit.

The first old studies that discussed the topic were critical linguistic studies, such as those by Taha Hussein and Shawqi Dhayf, who clarified that pre-Islamic poetry had "linguistic prowess" in the sense of strength and exaggeration in expression, whether in boasting, satire, or even in love poetry (Daif, 1969; Kusah, 2021). These scholars observed that after Islam, the basic tendency of language shifted from "self-glorification" to "human refinement". For example, Hussein (as cited in Kartono et al., 2023), stated that following Islam, Arabs did not lose their literary skills, but rather there was an internal moral censorship of the word, making the language calmer and more precise. Dhayf (1969) stated that Islam does not forbid poetry but rather requires it to serve mankind and community rather than just serving tribalism or pride.

Najeeb Al-Bahbīti and Ihsan Abbas examined the evolution of rhetorical imagery in Islamic poetry, from images of swords, blood, and conflict to pictures of guidance, faith, and light (Abbas, n.d.). For example, Al Bahbīti (1961) considered "refinement of language" as a sign of artistic maturity, because the poets began to communicate their ideals and sentiments in a more profound manner. It signifies that refining did not reduce the intensity of the poetry but rather channelled it in a constructive manner.

Abu Mousa (1974) noted that attitudes have changed as a result of Islam. If the word was genuine, it became an act of worship; if it was false or harmful, it became a sin. Here we see a crucial idea: poetry has evolved from mere eloquence to intellectual and moral responsibility, and language has been linked to intention. Some works concentrated on certain Early Islamic Era poets, such as Labid ibn Rabi'ah, Ka'b ibn Zuhayr, and Hassan ibn Thabit. For instance, Abdulaziz Al-Rifai examined Hassan ibn Thabit's poetry both before and after Islam, showing how it changed from exaggeration to reality and from caustic criticism to tender admiration.

The poet Ka'b ibn Zuhayr is a notable example of "refinement of expression" in the most evident sense, having transitioned from sarcasm to sorrowful poetry. Labid ibn Rabi'ah is a unique example since his poetry also underwent a significant change in meaning and language after Islam as a result of asceticism and reflection on life, death, and the hereafter.

Regarding the theoretical side, three key concepts create the broad framework that describes the language shift throughout this time:

- Religious and cultural change: Islam altered the Arabs' outlook on life, which in turn altered their perception of language, giving words a lofty function that included moral instruction in addition to evoking strong feelings. And here the study demonstrates that poetry has become a form of invitation, or a means of reform, not a tribal weapon as it was in the past.
- The aesthetic transformation in language: The beauty of pre-Islamic poetry was in its strength, in the violent imagery, and in the unusual diction, whereas the beauty of early Islamic poetry became characterised by simplicity, sincerity, and clarity. Rhetoric became associated with idea and meaning, not with verbal embellishment. Al-Khuli (as cited in Kamila et al., 2025) says that the "new rhetoric" that emerged after Islam was the rhetoric of the heart and mind together, not the rhetoric of sound and speech.
- Social and political transformation: The Arab society after Islam entered a phase of civilisational construction, so poetry began to serve this construction and became a means of education and upbringing. The poet became a teacher and reformer, not just a singer. From here emerged a new type of guiding poetry, which we today call "da'wah poetry" or "reformist poetry".

There are studies that have tried to link "pre-Islamic masculinity" with "Islamic refinement", such as Ahmad Maqloob's study, which stated that masculinity has not disappeared, but its meaning has changed. Masculinity has become not about physical strength or violent rhetoric, but about self-control and wise expression. And the analysis reveals a new concept called "polite masculinity", which means strength with calmness and steadfastness with wisdom (Al-Zubaidi, 2022).

As for modern studies, they approached the topic from a contemporary linguistic perspective, especially discourse analysis studies, such as Daoud and Hammadi (2022), research, which used pragmatic theory to analyse the difference between the tone of pre-Islamic poetry and the tone of early Islamic poetry. She demonstrated that the change is not only in the words but also in the intentions and communicative function. When the Muslim poet speaks, he speaks with the intention of reform and rectification, not with the intention of rebuttal or challenge, and this alone changes the very nature of the language.

In other studies, which linked literary transformation to intellectual transformation, it was said that the Muslim poet has developed a new linguistic awareness because he now feels responsible before God for his words. This means that there is now a self-censorship that regulates the language, and this internal refinement is what brought about the literary change. Through all these studies, we notice that everyone agrees that the change that occurred was not sudden but gradual, and it went through a transitional phase experienced by the poets who witnessed both eras. And for those who combined the eloquence of the pre-Islamic era with the spirit of Islam, here the true beauty of the literary transformation emerges.

To summarise, two fundamental ideas form the theoretical foundation of this study: The first is the idea that language reflects society's collective consciousness, meaning that language changes along with ideals. The second is that the word among the Arabs is not just a means; it is an entity with a spirit and influence. Islam redefined this spirit, so the good word became a charity, eloquence became a responsibility, and poetry became part of the spiritual education of

the nation. Therefore, we can say that the poetry of the early Islamic period was not merely an extension of the pre-Islamic era, nor a complete break from it, but rather a natural development within a new ethical framework. This is what makes the study of language in this period important, because it shows how the Arab man transitioned from a culture of "strength in speech" to a culture of "values in speech".

The previous studies provide us with a strong foundation while also making us feel that there is a gap that needs to be filled: there is no study that has simultaneously combined linguistic, ethical, and intellectual analysis in this period, and this is where this study comes in. We want to complete the picture, linking word and idea, rhetoric and refinement, and trying to understand not just what changed in the language, but why and how it changed.

III. METHODOLOGY

The appropriate methodology for this research is descriptive-analytical, along with a comparative approach between two periods: The Pre-Islamic Era and the Early Islamic Period. The study described the literary phenomenon (which is the change in language, form, and meaning in poetry), then analysed it and drew conclusions from it. In other words, the researchers read the poetic texts carefully, observing how the words had changed, how the meanings had become calmer and more delicate, and how the style reflected the new values. But the method alone is not enough, so we need to use a somewhat comparative method to be able to show the difference between pre-Islamic poetry and early Islamic poetry. The researchers selected poetic excerpts or poems from each period and compared them in terms of language, meaning, symbolism, and imagery.

A. Study Sample

The sample included a selected group of pre-Islamic and Islamic poems. For example, from the Pre-Islamic period, the sample included Antara ibn Shadad, Zuhayr ibn Abi Sulma, and Tarafah ibn al-Abd, and from the early Islamic period, three figures were included: Ka'b ibn Zuhayr, Hassan ibn Thabit, and Labid ibn Rabi'ah. They were selected because they clearly depict the changeover phase and make the comparison more realistic.

B. Data Analysis

The study explained the meanings simply, emphasising the essence: how the poet learnt to use language to deliver an educational message rather than to boast and how the concept of language evolved from pride to values. These verses were studied from many perspectives: linguistic angle (the word's shape and structure), intellectual angle (what is the verse's purpose, and what is the poet trying to say?), and stylistic angle (how did the poet use rhetoric? Is it harsh or gentle?).

C. Research Tools

Since the topic is linguistic and literary, the primary tool is textual analysis. The researchers referred to the original texts from the collections of famous poets such as: The Diwan of Zuhayr ibn Abi Sulma, The Diwan of Labid ibn Rabi'ah, The Diwan of Hassan ibn Thabit, and The Diwan of Ka'b ibn Zuhayr. Some examples were chosen from each diwan that represent the transformation that has occurred in the language. After this, linguistic and rhetorical analysis was used to see the change in vocabulary (like how words of war and insults disappeared and words of faith and mercy emerged), structures (how sentences became calmer, shorter, and clearer), and metaphorical images (how the image became symbolic and humane instead of being about violence and fighting).

D. Data Collection

The sources are of two types: primary sources (these are the poetry collections of the poets who lived during the two eras. These texts are the foundation upon which the analysis was built), and secondary sources (literary criticism books and modern studies that discussed linguistic development after Islam, such as the studies of Shawqi Dhayf, Taha Hussein, Ehsan Abbas, and Amin al-Khuli).

The study followed these procedures:

- Collecting the poetic material: The researchers first gathered the poems that represent the two stages and arranged them by theme (pride, praise, wisdom, love, etc.).
- Linguistic analysis: The words were analysed, examining those whose meanings have changed, disappeared, or taken on new meanings.
- Semantic analysis: The focus was on the overall meaning of the poem, what it expresses, and whether it serves the idea of tribal pride or religious values.
- Comparison: Examples from both periods were compared to see the difference in performance and meaning.
- Conclusion: The researchers drew general conclusions that clarify how Islam influenced literary style and linguistic awareness.

E. Potential Challenges

There are some elements that might make the research somewhat difficult, such as:

- The scarcity of early Islamic texts compared to the pre-Islamic era.
- Discrepancies in narratives between ancient literary works.

- The overlap of religious poetry with tribal poetry in some poems.

But the researchers overcame these challenges by making a precise comparison between the narratives and referring to reliable sources such as "Al-Aghani" by Al-Isfahani and "Sharh Al-Mu'allaqat" by Al-Zawzani.

In short, the research described the literary phenomenon (language transformation), examined poetry writings from both times, compared findings from the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods, and extracted new literary values. This perspective allows us to see the bigger picture, not just as poetry, but as an intellectual and cultural shift that occurred in the Arab world with the arrival of Islam. It indicates that we are not only altering words but also changing our way of thinking.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. The Function of Language Evolved From a Weapon Into a Tool of Moral Refinement

The word's function changed from being a weapon to one of refinement. With the advent of Islam, the phrase—which had previously been employed for rhetorical conflict (satire, pride, challenge)—became a tool for invitation, advice, and refinement. This shift signifies a revolution in the role of language in society rather than just a change in vocabulary. Antara's well-known pre-Islamic statement,

ولقد ذكرك والرماح نواهل منى
وببيض الهند تقطر من دمي
فوددت تقبيل السيوف لأنها
لمعت كبارق ثغرك المتبسّم
I remembered you while the spears were drinking from my blood,
And the Indian blades dripped with it.
I longed to kiss those swords—
For they gleamed like the flash of your smiling teeth.

The spirit of combat and manhood is embodied in this poetry. The poetry conjures up a striking picture in which the memories are entwined with blood and weaponry. The reader is transported to the scene of conflict and violence by the words.

From the early Islamic period, Ka'b ibn Zuhayr's poetry after his conversion to Islam (the renowned opening of "Bant Sadaad")—while it is a personal sentiment and remorse, it offers refinement, sensitivity, and spiritual guidance:

بانت سعاد فقلبي اليوم متبول
مُنْتَمٍ إِثْرَهَا، لَمْ يُفِدْ مَكْبُولُ
وما سعاد غداة البين إذ رَحَلُوا
إِلَّا أَعْنُ غَضِيضُ الطَّرْفِ مَكْحُولُ
هيفاء مُقْبِلَةً، عَجْزَاءُ مُدْبِرَةً
لَا يُشْتَكَى قِصَرُ مِنْهَا... وَلَا طُولُ
تَجَلُّو عَوَارِضَ ذِي ظَلَمٍ إِذَا ابْتَسَمَتْ
كَأَنَّهُ مُنْهَلٌ بِالرَّاحِ مَعْلُولُ
يَا وَيْحَهَا خُلَّةٌ لَوْ أَنَّهَا صَدَقَتْ
مَا وَعَدَتْ أَوْ لَوْ أَنَّ النَّصِيحَ مَقْبُولُ
كَانَتْ مَوَاعِيدُ عَرَقِ لَهَا مَثَلًا
وَمَا مَوَاعِيدُهَا إِلَّا الْأَبَاطِيلُ
فَلَا يَغُرُّكَ مَا مَنَنْتَ وَمَا وَعَدْتَ
"إِنَّ الْأَمَانِي وَالْأَحْلَامَ تَضَلِيلُ"
Su'ad has departed, and today my heart is stricken—
A lover enslaved by her love, whom no cure can free.
And Su'ad, on the morning of parting when they left,
Was nothing but a graceful woman with modest, kohl-lined eyes.
Slender when approaching, full-figured when she turns away—
Neither too short to fault nor too tall to complain.
When she smiles, she reveals teeth like pearls,
As though moistened with wine, gleaming and bright.
Woe to her companionship—if only she were truthful
To what she promised, or if counsel were accepted!
Her promises have become like those of 'Urqub—
For her pledges are nothing but falsehoods.
So do not let her favors or promises deceive you—
For hopes and dreams are but delusions.

(From the "Burdah" poem of Ka'b ibn Zuhayr in praise of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him.)

The poem reflects the poet's shift from invective and pride to expressions of regret and refinement. This result indicates that there is a change in the "intention" of the speech; it means what the goal behind it is. The pre-Islamic poet often intended to influence at the tribal level (honour, power, restoring dignity), whereas the poet in the early Islamic period aimed at guidance; the word here became reformatory in purpose. The findings indicate that the understanding that language is not neutral: its function changes according to the prevailing ideology and values.

B. The Image of Man Has Changed From the Heroic Warrior to the Humble, Faithful Human

In a clear contrast in the image of the self, the pre-Islamic era perceived man as an act of power ("fahl", "qawwad", "possessor of chivalry"), whereas the poetry of the early Islamic period presents an image of a humble, conscious, submissive individual before the Creator, more concerned with morals than appearances.

For example, in the Pre-Islamic period, to show the essence of masculinity, Amr ibn Kulthum's verse embodies challenge and self-confidence:

أَلَا لَا يَعْلَمُ الْأَقْوَامُ أَنَّا
تَضَعَعْنَا وَأَنَا قَدْ وَنِينَا
أَلَا لَا يَجْهَلُنْ أَحَدٌ عَلَيْنَا
فَنَجْهَلُ فَوْقَ جَهْلِ الْجَاهِلِينَا

Let it be known to all people that we have been shaken and grown weary.
And let no one act ignorantly toward us—
For if they do, we shall surpass them in ignorance itself!

The tone here is one of challenge and declaration of sovereignty. In Islam, as a reminder of humility, Labid ibn Rabi'ah, after embracing Islam, says:

أَلَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ مَا خَلَا اللَّهَ بَاطِلٌ
وَكُلُّ نَعِيمٍ لَا مَحَالَةَ زَائِلٌ
وَكُلُّ أَنَاسٍ سَوْفَ تَدْخُلُ بَيْنَهُمْ
دُوبِيَّةٌ تَصْفُرُ مِنْهَا الْأَنَامِلُ

Behold! Everything except God is vain,
And every pleasure will surely fade.
And every group of people—between them one day—
A grave will descend, turning fingers pale with death (from death's chill).

The language used here encourages us to see life from a new perspective: righteousness and standing before God are more important than material power. This change created a new human discourse; the poet has become a social and moral responsibility, not just a loud voice of the tribe. This gives poetry a clear educational dimension, and it also affects the audience — people take a lesson, not just joy.

C. Refinement of Vocabulary: The Transformation of Poetic Lexicon

There is a clear change in vocabulary: words related to war, stabbing, and invasion have relatively decreased, and words like 'forgiveness', 'honesty', 'piety', and 'mercy' have become more dominant. In the Pre-Islamic era, "testimony", "spear", "duel", and "sheath" were common terms in the core language. Antara's poem simplifies the concept:

حَكِّمْ سُبُوفَكُمْ فِي رِقَابِ الْعُدُلِ
وَإِذَا نَزَلَتْ بِدَارِ ذُلٍّ فَارْحَلِ
وَإِذَا بَلَّيْتَ بِظَالِمٍ كُنْ ظَالِمًا
وَإِذَا لَقِيتَ دَوِيَّ الْجَهَالَةِ فَاجْهَلِي
وَإِذَا الْجَبَانُ نَهَاكَ يَوْمَ كَرِيهَةٍ
خَوْفًا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ إِزْدِحَامِ الْجَحْفَلِ
فَاعْصِ مَقَالَتَهُ وَلَا تَحْفَلْ بِهَا
وَأُقْدِمِ إِذَا حَقَّ اللَّفَا فِي الْأَوَّلِ
وَاخْتَرْ لِنَفْسِكَ مَنْزِلًا لَا تَعْلُو بِهِ
أَوْ مِتْ كَرِيمًا تَحْتَ ظِلِّ الْقُسْطِ
فَالْمَوْتُ لَا يُنْجِيكَ مِنْ آفَاتِهِ
حِصْنٌ وَلَوْ شَيْدَتْهُ بِالْجَنْدَلِ

Wield your sword upon the necks of the blamers,
And if you dwell in a land of humiliation—depart!
If you are afflicted by an oppressor, then be oppressive in return,
And if you meet the ignorant, answer them with ignorance.

If the coward warns you on a day of hardship,
 Fearing for you the crush of the marching army,
 Defy his words and pay them no heed—
 Advance when true combat first begins.
 Choose for yourself a dwelling that lifts your honour,
 Or die a noble man beneath the shade of spears.
 For death will not save you from its destined harms,
 Even if you fortify yourself with walls of solid stone.

In the Islamic era, the poet employed "forgiveness", "pardon", "religion", "light", "truth", and "repentance". For example, the verses praising the Prophet by Hassan ibn Thabit are filled with words of respect and affection instead of insults or slander:

وَأَحْسَنُ مِنْكَ لَمْ تَرَ قَطُّ عَيْنِي
 وَأَجْمَلُ مِنْكَ لَمْ تَلِدِ النِّسَاءُ
 خُلِقْتَ مُرَّةً مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ
 كَأَنَّكَ قَدْ خُلِقْتَ كَمَا تَشَاءُ

My eyes have never seen anyone more beautiful than you,
 Nor has any woman given birth to one more handsome.
 You were created free from every flaw—
 As though you were created exactly as you wished.

The transformation of the lexicon is a sign of an educational and social process: society has begun to value religious and moral values, and the language aligns with these values. Linguistically, we can track how the "tree of meanings" has changed in poetic collections; that is, which words have lost their lustre and which words have gained prominence.

D. The Purpose of Poetry Has Changed: From Embellishment to Guidance

The purpose of poetry has changed from artistry to guidance. The purpose of writing poetry has expanded; poetry has become a tool for conveying religious and moral messages, not just for praise and satire.

For example, Al-Hassan ibn Thabit used his poetry to defend the Prophet and spread the message of Islam; his poetry contains glory and ambition but with ethical commitment:

أَعْرُ، عَلَيْهِ النَّبِيُّ خَاتَمٌ
 مِنَ اللَّهِ مَشْهُودٌ يَلُوحُ وَيُشْهَدُ
 وَضَعَ إِلَهُ اسْمَ النَّبِيِّ إِلَى اسْمِهِ،
 إِذَا قَالَ فِي الْخَمْسِ الْمُؤَذِّنُ أَشْهَدُ
 وَشَقَّ لَهُ مِنْ اسْمِهِ لِيَجْلَهُ،
 فَذُو الْعَرْشِ مَحْمُودٌ، وَهَذَا مُحَمَّدُ

Radiant he is—upon him shines the Seal of Prophethood,
 A sign from God, evident and witnessed by all.
 God joined the Prophet's name with His own—
 When the muezzin proclaims in every prayer, "I bear witness."
 And He drew from His own Name to honour him:
 The Lord of the Throne is Mahmūd (The Praised), and this is Muhammad (Praiseworthy).

نَبِيٌّ أَتَانَا بَعْدَ يَأْسٍ وَفِتْرَةٍ
 مِنَ الرِّسَالِ، وَالْأَوْتَانِ فِي الْأَرْضِ تَعْبُدُ
 فَأَمْسَى سِرَاجاً مُسْتَنِيرًا وَهَادِيًا،
 يَلُوحُ كَمَا لَاحَ الصَّقِيلُ الْمُهَيَّئُ
 وَأَنْذَرْنَا نَارًا، وَبَشَّرَ جَنَّةً،
 وَعَلَّمَنَا الْإِسْلَامَ، فَاللَّهُ نَحْمَدُ

A Prophet came to us after despair and long silence,
 When idols were worshipped across the earth.
 He became a shining lamp and a guiding light,
 Radiant like a finely polished sword.
 He warned us of Hellfire and gave glad tidings of Paradise,
 And taught us Islam—so we praise God.

وَأَنْتَ إِلَهَ الْخَلْقِ رَبِّي وَخَالِقِي،
 بِذَلِكَ مَا عَمَرْتُ فَيَا لِنَاسٍ أَشْهَدُ
 تَعَالَيْتَ رَبَّ النَّاسِ عَنْ قَوْلٍ مَنْ دَعَا

سِوَاكَ إِلَهًا، أَنْتَ أَعْلَى وَأَمَجْدُ
لَكَ الْخَلْقُ وَالنِّعْمَاءُ، وَالْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ،
فِيَاكَ نَسْتَعِذُّ، وَإِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ

And You—O Lord of creation—are my God and Creator;
For as long as I live, I bear witness to this before all people.
Exalted are You, Lord of mankind, far above
Those who call upon any besides You—you are the Highest, the Most Glorious.
To You belong creation, blessings, and all command;
It is You we seek guidance from, and You alone we worship.

Ka'b ibn Zuhayr, when he praised the Prophet with his poem "Banat Su'ād", did not praise himself or his tribe but rather declared repentance and expressed respect. This means that poetry has entered the realm of ethics and education and has become part of shaping public discourse. Poets now have a social role: they remind people of virtues, give advice, and reform. The listener or reader has come to receive poetry as a lesson, not just as an artistic display.

E. The Change in the Rhetorical Image: From Images of War to Images of Light and Spiritual Symbolism

In a clear visual transformation, the rhetorical images shifted towards spiritual symbols (light, guidance, tranquilly), instead of warlike and violent comparisons. For example, in the Pre-Islamic era, images of horses, swords, and plains; an example from Zuhayr or Antara.

مَوْتُ الْفَتَى فِي عِزِّ خَيْرٍ لَهُ
مِنْ أَنْ يَبِيتَ أَسِيرَ طَرْفٍ أَكْخَلِ

إِنْ كُنْتُ فِي عَدَدِ الْعَبِيدِ فَهَمَّتِي
فَوْقَ الثَّرْيَا وَالسِّمَاكِ الْأَعْزَلِ

أَوْ أَنْكَرْتَ فُرْسَانُ عَيْسٍ نِسْتِي
فَسِنَانُ رُمَحِي وَالْحُسَامُ يُقْرُ لِي

وَيَذَابِلِي وَمُهَنْدِي ثَلْثُ الْعُلَا
لَا بِالْقَرَابَةِ وَالْعَدِيدِ الْأَجْزَلِ

وَرَمَيْتُ مُهْرِي فِي الْعَجَاجِ فَخَاضَهُ
وَالنَّارُ تَقْدَحُ مِنْ شِفَارِ الْأَنْصُلِ

خَاضَ الْعَجَاجُ مُحْجَلًا حَتَّى إِذَا
شَهِدَ الْوَقِيعَةَ عَادَ غَيْرَ مُحْجَلِ

وَلَقَدْ نَكَبْتُ بَنِي حُرَيْقَةَ نَكْبَةً
لَمَّا طَعَنْتُ صَمِيمَ قَلْبِ الْأَخِيلِ

وَقَتَّلْتُ فَارِسَهُمْ رَبِيعَةَ عَنُوءَ
وَالْهَيْذَبَانَ وَجَابِرَ بْنِ مُهْلَهْلِ

وَأَبْنَى رَبِيعَةَ وَالْخَرِيشَ وَمَالِكَا
وَالزَّبْرَقَانَ غَدَا طَرِيخَ الْجَنْدَلِ

وَأَنَا ابْنُ سَوْدَاءِ الْجَبِينِ كَأَنَّهُ
ضَبْعُ تَرْعٍ فِي رُسُومِ الْمَنْزَلِ

السَّاقُ مِنْهَا مِثْلُ سَاقِ نَعَامَةٍ
وَالشَّعْرُ مِنْهَا مِثْلُ حَبِّ الْفُلْفُلِ

وَالثَّغْرُ مِنْ تَحْتِ اللَّثَامِ كَأَنَّهُ
بَرْقٌ تَلَالُؤٌ فِي الظَّلَامِ الْمُسْدَلِ

يَا نَازِلِينَ عَلَى الْحِمَى وَدِيَارِهِ
هَلَا رَأَيْتُمْ فِي الدِّيَارِ تَقْلُفِي

قَدْ طَالَ عِزُّكُمْ وَذُلِّي فِي الْهَوَى
وَمِنَ الْعَجَائِبِ عِزُّكُمْ وَذُلِّي

لَا تَسْقِنِي مَاءَ الْحَيَاةِ بِذِلَّةٍ
بَلْ فَاسْقِنِي بِالْعِزِّ كَأَسَ الْخَنْظَلِ

مَاءَ الْحَيَاةِ بِذِلَّةٍ كَجَهَنَّمَ
وَجَهَنَّمَ بِالْعِزِّ أَطْيَبُ مَنْزِلٍ

Death of a man in honour is better for him
Than sleeping captive to the glance of a kohl-lined eye.

Though I may be counted among the slaves, my ambition
Rises beyond the Pleiades and the highest stars.

And if the horsemen of 'Abs deny my lineage,
The point of my spear and the blade of my sword will testify.

By my spearhead and my polished blade, I gained glory—
Not through kinship nor vast numbers.

I drove my horse into the swirling dust until
Fire sparked from the edges of its iron hooves.

He plunged through the dust, swift-footed, until
When the battle was witnessed, he returned no longer white-footed.

I struck the sons of Ḥurayqah a blow
When I pierced the very heart of al-Akhyal.

I slew their horseman Rabī'ah outright,
And al-Haydhubān and Jābir son of Muhalhil.

And the two sons of Rabī'ah, and al-Ḥarīsh, and Mālīk—
Even al-Zibriqān, laid low upon the ground.

I am the son of a dark-skinned woman, whose brow
Is like a hyena raised among the traces of ruins.

Her legs like those of an ostrich,
Her hair like grains of black pepper.

And her teeth beneath the veil—
Lightning flashing in the darkness.

O you who dwell upon the protected lands and homes—
Have you not seen how I stir restlessly in these dwellings?

Your honour has grown while mine has diminished in love—
And of wonders is your pride and my humiliation.

Do not give me the water of life in disgrace—
But give me instead the bitter cup of death in honour.

For the water of life in humiliation is like Hell—
And Hell in dignity is a sweeter dwelling (By 'Antarah ibn Shaddād)

In the Islamic era, images of light, the sea as mercy, and the heart as a passage to faith. An example in praise of the Prophet or in sermons:

شَقَّ لَهُ مِنْ إِسْمِهِ كِي يُجَلِّهُ
فَدَوَّ الْعَرْشَ مَحْمُودٌ وَهَذَا مُحَمَّدُ

نَبِيٍّ أَتَانَا بَعْدَ يَأْسٍ وَقَفَرَةٍ
مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَالْأَوْثَانِ فِي الْأَرْضِ تُعْبَدُ
فَأَمْسَى سِرَاجاً مُسْتَنِيرًا وَهَادِيًا
يَلُوحُ كَمَا لَاحَ الصَّقِيلُ الْمُهَيَّئُ

He drew from His own Name to honor him,
For the Lord of the Throne is Mahmūd, and this is Muhammad.
A Prophet came to us after despair and a long pause,
When messengers had ceased and idols were worshipped on earth.
He became a shining, radiant lamp and a guide,
Gleaming like a finely polished sword.

This transformation shows that rhetoric has adapted to its new subject. The poet no longer needs images of violence to be impactful; the impact is now built on symbols close to the spirit and inner life.

F. A Calmer and More Balanced Style and Tone

Clearer phrases, a presentation that is closer to the audience, and a tone that is possibly less provocative and more contemplative are all examples of how the general style has gotten simpler and calmer. In his commendation, Ka'b ibn Zuhayr, for instance, states:

إِنَّ الرُّسُولَ لَنُورٌ يُسْتَضَاءُ بِهِ
مُهَيَّئٌ مِنْ سُبُوفِ اللَّهِ مَسْلُوبُ
فِي غُصْنَةٍ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ قَالَ قَاتِلُهُمْ
يَبْطِنُ مَكَّةَ لَمَّا اسْتَلَمُوا زُؤُلَا

Indeed, the Messenger is a light by which one is enlightened,
A sharpened blade drawn from the swords of God.
Among a group of Quraysh, one of them declared:
'In the heart of Mecca, when they embraced Islam, they were overcome.'

"The Messenger is a light by which one is guided" is a simple and uncomplicated remark; he uses passionate language without pretension. Additionally, Hassan ibn Thabit presents a serious, polite, and methodical defence of the Prophet:

بَانَتْ سَعَادُ قَلْبِي الْيَوْمَ مَتَبُولُ
مُتَّيِّمٌ إِثْرَهَا لَمْ يَجَزْ مَكْبُولُ
وَمَا سَعَادُ غَدَاةِ الْبَيْنِ إِذْ رَخَلُوا
إِلَّا أَعْنُ غَضِيضُ الطَّرْفِ مَكْحُولُ
هَيْفَاءُ مُقْبِلَةً عِزَاءُ مُدْبِرَةً
لَا يُشْتَكَى قِصَرُ مِنْهَا وَلَا طَوْلُ
تَجَلَوْا عَوَارِضَ ذِي ظَلَمٍ إِذَا ابْتَسَمَتْ
كَأَنَّهُ مِنْهَلٌّ بِالرَّاحِ مَعْلُولُ

Su'ād has departed, and today my heart is wounded;
enslaved by love for her, unredeemed and bound.
Su'ād, on the morning of parting when they departed,
was but a graceful one, with modest eyes and kohl adorned.
Slender when approaching, full-hipped when turning away —
None could complain of her being too short or too tall.
When she smiles, she reveals bright teeth amid the dark —
as though she were a refreshing drink mixed with wine.

The poem's simplicity is not a flaw; rather, it demonstrates the poet's capacity to express a significant idea in a small number of words. This shows that the language is mature. The researcher discovers that the goal of linguistic simplification in the post-Islamic era is psychological and moral impact.

G. The Development of Ethical Principles as a Key Subject

In many poetry passages, virtues like kindness, forgiveness, tolerance, and honesty are evident. These are some of Labid's lyrics that remind people of the end of the world and deal with asceticism:

وَمَا الْمَرْءُ إِلَّا كَالشَّيْهَابِ وَضَوَائِهِ
يَحُورُ رَمَاداً بَعْدَ إِذْ هُوَ سَاطِعُ
وَمَا الْبِرُّ إِلَّا مُضْمَرَاتٌ مِنَ النَّقَى
وَمَا الْمَالُ إِلَّا مُعَمَّرَاتٌ وَدَائِعُ

A person is nothing but like a shooting star,
and his light turns to ashes after it once shone.
Righteousness is nothing but hidden traces of piety.
And wealth is nothing but possessions and deposits that endure.

These are didactic or advisory verses by the poets of the Companions and later poets that encourage good character. The presence of these values in poetry contributes to their social entrenchment. The poet has become a kind of cultural educator, and his words have turned into a "public discourse" that influences people.

H. *The Decline of Verbal Bravado: A Language Closer to the People*

The poet's desire to use exaggerated or strange words to provoke astonishment has diminished; the focus has shifted to conveying meaning. Imru' al-Qais: "gifā nabki" — despite its magnificence, it is rich in imagery:

قَفَا نَبْكَ مِنْ ذِكْرِي حَبِيبٍ وَمَنْزِلٍ
بَسْفُطِ اللَّوَى بَيْنَ الدَّخُولِ فَحَوْمَلٍ
"Let us stop and weep over the memory of a beloved and a dwelling,
At Siqt al-Liwa, between ad-Dakhool and Hawmal."

Al-Hassan ibn Thabit: His verses are direct and clear; the goal becomes apparent quickly:

وَأَحْسَنُ مِنْكَ لَمْ تَرَ قَطُّ عَيْنِي
وَأَجْمَلُ مِنْكَ لَمْ تَلِدِ النِّسَاءُ
خُلِقْتَ مُبْرَأً مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ
كَأَنَّكَ قَدْ خُلِقْتَ كَمَا تَشَاءُ
And more beautiful than you my eyes have never seen.
And fairer than you no woman has ever been born.
You were created free from every flaw.
As if you were made exactly as you wished.

The choice here serves a new function: the audience receives a religious or moral message quickly. This is certainly useful for spreading the message in a changing society. The harmony and integration between heritage and refinement: Poets as a bridge between two worlds.

I. *Reconciliation and Integration Between Heritage and Refinement*

The poets who lived during the transitional period combined the skill of pre-Islamic expression with the spirit of Islamic refinement; they created a "linguistic bridge" that allowed the language to develop without losing its eloquence. Labid, Zuhayr, and Ka'b ibn Zuhayr: Each of them maintained the beauty of the composition while changing the content.

The transformation was not a radical break; it was an adjustment and adaptation. This is a bourgeois view that change was a gradual social and cultural process. Language shifts are connected to value shifts: as values change, so does language. After Islam, poetry was employed to improve souls rather than simply depicting valour and vehemence. Religious and social structures also contributed to this transformation. The study revealed that poetry underwent a profound linguistic revolution, having religious, cultural, and social repercussions. It is more than just eliminating or adding words; there has been a movement in people's thinking, the purpose of communication, and the function of the poet. When the word is refined, it has a larger effect because it begins to reach the conscience and heart.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study revealed that transition from "pre-Islamic masculinity" to the language of "expressive refinement" in the early Islamic period was not a mere change in words or images, but rather a fundamental shift in the poet's consciousness, the language, and society. Language evolved to become a tool for building rather than dispute resolution. Literary language has attained "internal refinement"; the poet has learnt to feel a responsibility for their words, and the audience has begun to see poetry as a message rather than merely amusement or bragging.

The study showed that the relationships between language, moral values, culture, and religion are close. The new values (justice, mercy, honesty, moderation) were directly reflected in the vocabulary, imagery, and style. The transitional poets (from the pre-Islamic era to the early Islamic period), such as Ka'b ibn Zuhayr, Labid ibn Rabi'ah, and Zuhayr ibn Abi Sulma, built a bridge between the style of the pre-Islamic era and the content of Islam, which helped the language to advance without neglecting the old heritage. The rhetorical approach shifted to value more than form; the images that were used for war and heroism became used for enlightenment and guidance, and the style became calmer, closer to reality, with the idea carrying more weight than ornamentation.

The study proved that the language used in poetry is not independent of the social system – meaning that linguistic changes occurred alongside social changes and religious and cultural renewal. Finally, despite the considerable changes, the pre-Islamic legacy was not lost; rather, it served as a reference. Yet, the language has developed to reflect the ideals and demands of the Early Islamic Era. This suggests that the transformation was integrative rather than disruptive rather than a total erasure.

The study recommends that future academics perform a quantitative examination of the language in the two periods (Pre-Islamic - Early Islamic) to observe how many terms like "violence", "fighting", and "pride" have reduced while words like "mercy", "faith", and "forgiveness" have grown. It also recommends that the educational curricula in universities and institutes of Arabic literature include a unit or chapter specifically teaching how the language of Arabic poetry has changed due to cultural and religious shifts and encourages students to engage in comparative reading between pre-Islamic and Islamic texts.

The study recommends the practical application of research within poetry workshops or literary writing; that is, modern poets or literature students should use this knowledge not only to understand the past but also to write today's poetry in a language that embodies refined expression and moral values. The study recommends including appropriate poetic texts in literary analysis within research that connects language and society; for example, studying the relationship between the language of poetry and social values among Arabs in the early Islamic period.

Also, future research should look at how literary language was impacted by the move from oral to written forms, as well as the impact of new Arab culture during the early Islamic state. Finally, the study proposes emphasising that literary language is not just an artistic object but also a tool of learning and refining by including this component in language and literature education. We can assist future generations in comprehending that words have weight and that our speech has influence.

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